

Baptist Record

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- Bible Book: *God's world plan revealed*

Holding on to the truth

By Bobby Lee, Tupelo
II Thessalonians 2:1-15

Paul had a special problem to deal with in this passage. Naturally people are concerned about the subject of death. Apparently what had happened was that there were those who were teaching that the "day of the Lord" had already taken place.

Paul writes them that that day will not come before a great falling away takes place in our own day. But there is another thing. The "man of sin" must be revealed. Just who is this "man of sin"? Well, for one thing, we know that he is completely against God and everything good. He even pretends to take the place of God and sits in the temple demanding that he be worshipped as God.

Apparently there are evil days ahead and there is one who restrains the evil one at this time. We believe this restraining one to be the Holy Spirit. Things are bad enough in the world today, but just think what it will be when the Holy Spirit is taken out

of the world.

The order of events seems to be that the next thing to happen will be the second coming of Jesus to this earth. The dead in Christ will be raised from their graves and Christians who are alive will be caught up to be with the Lord forever. This will be when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world. Then will begin the Great Tribulation on the earth. The Jews will rebuild the Temple and things will proceed normally for 3½ years. Then the man of sin will stop the Jews from sacrificing in the temple and demand that he be worshipped as God.

For 3½ years there will be tribulation on the earth. Much persecution will take place. At the end of the Great Tribulation, Christ will come back in a scene described in the 19th chapter of Revelation. Then the Battle of Armageddon will be fought in which all the forces that oppose God will be destroyed.

Then Satan will be bound for 1,000 years during the millennial reign of Christ upon this earth. For 1,000 years there will be peace and prosperity.

At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be loosed for a short season that he may have opportunity to deceive the nations once more.

After Satan is finally destroyed, the new heavens and new earth that John saw in Revelation 21 will appear.

All of the description of "What is heaven going to be like?" is that of untold beauty. We cannot begin to imagine what eternity holds for us.

We cannot be dogmatic about the things we have discussed, but we can be prepared to meet God whenever he comes.

It is our responsibility to be prepared to meet him. We may differ about the interpretation of events to take place, but one thing we know, and that is the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ.

World plan revealed

By Vernon L. Sikes, Yazoo City
Isaiah 40:1-48:22

I wonder how many times I've heard people say, "God certainly works in mysterious ways." The strange thing about it is that such observations are rarely made until AFTER the period of tribulation has turned into something positive. During the crisis, it's sometimes difficult to see that God's hand is at work in even bad situations.

One of Isaiah's focuses throughout the book is on the people's lack of faith in what God was able to do for them. They were facing the worst of times. Because of their prolonged straying away from God's laws, his judgment was imminent. As Isaiah said in 42:20, "You see and understand what is right but won't heed nor do it; you hear but you won't listen." They were blinded to God's messages and "though set on fire, and burned, they will not understand..." (42:25).

Despite the pain that had been caused God, Isaiah turned to words of comfort and assurance in chapter 40. Jerusalem had been saved from Assyria, but then the threat lay in Babylon, for Jerusalem was to fall at their hands. The Jews were to be taken into exile, and in chapters 40-48, Isaiah left current events behind and stood with the captives in Babylon at the end of their long exile.

After the years of punishment in their exile, their sins would be pardoned and the Lord promised to give them twice as many blessings as he gave them punishment before (40:2). God in his mighty power would continue being consistent in his caring for the needs of his people as he promised to smooth and straighten the roads as the Israelites returned to the glory of Jerusalem (40:3-5).

"But how on earth would God be able to stand up to Babylon?" many of the Israelites probably asked. No doubt, their view of God's magnificence was grossly inadequate. As Isaiah put it, "But they rush to make a new idol" (41:7); "the man too poor to buy expensive gods... will find a tree... and hire a man to carve a face on it, and that's his god — a god that cannot even move" (40:20); "What fools they are who manufacture idols for their gods" (44:9). In short, they scurried here and they scurried there in their search for a power large enough to deliver them from their persecution. They were feeding on ashes (44:20).

But God had a plan; God always has a plan. In their usual form, the Israelites even questioned God's way of handling the situation. In his master plan for delivering the exiles, he named a heathen to accomplish his

purpose. Through Cyrus the Persian, he would cause Babylon to fall, thereby freeing his chosen to return to Jerusalem. Some of those who heard the prophet's announcement reacted negatively, but Isaiah retorted bluntly to their audacity: "Woe to the man who fights with his Creator" (45:9). "Jehovah... says: What right have you to question what I do? Who are you to command me concerning the work of my hands? ... I have raised up Cyrus to fulfill my righteous purpose, and I will direct all his paths" (45:11-13).

After Cyrus' victory, the remnants of the nation will be called together and at that time, the worthlessness of their idols will be evident as they face God (45:20-21), and all who acknowledge his sovereignty and acts of righteousness will be saved (45:22-25).

Were the heathen nations worthy of being saved? Were the Israelites worthy of being saved? Was anyone on the face of the earth worthy of being saved? Indeed not! The people of Israel claimed to be the people of God, but they had not acted as though they were (48:1-2). Israel deserved to be destroyed, and she would have been but "for my own sake — yes, for my own sake — I will save you from my anger and not destroy you..." (48:11).

How complex is God's workings in our lives — a fact which we would do well to remember. But because of our frailty, we question God's procedure, and we forget that he is in control of the world's situation. We are traitors, "rebels from earliest childhood, rotten through and through" (48:8), but by his grace, we are saved despite ourselves. "Truly, O God of Israel, Savior, you work in strange, mysterious ways" (45:15). Though we can't always understand your plan, Lord, you work to save your people so they may, in turn, glorify and sing praises to you.

Working through the church

By Charles E. Myers
Acts 20:18-28

I believe in the local church with all of my being. I am a product of the ministry of a local church. I was saved in a regular church service. I was baptized by the pastor into the family of that church. I was called to preach and ordained in that church. I took study courses on how to do in that church. I taught my first Sunday school class as a high school boy. I learned to take a church census and make personal visits in that church. I won my first convert to Christ in that church. That church sent me out to further my education and encouraged me to follow God's call to minister in larger areas. In every church I have served I have continued the principles instilled by that church. It is easy to see why I believe in the local church.

In our lesson for Sunday we study the passage where Paul makes his final appearance before the church at Ephesus. The city of Ephesus had not treated Paul kindly, but a group had responded to him and became the church. In his final appearance he reviews his ministry and encourages them to continue what has been established.

He reminded them that his ministry had been a daily demonstration, not an occasional thing. He had lived with them and in spite of the hardship imposed by the Jews who sought his life, he had without any reservations preached Jesus. He taught openly in public places and visited in homes where he taught again. He witnessed to all who would listen whether they were Jews or Greeks. And the substance of his message had been a call for repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. This is to be the pattern of church life after he is gone.

He is leaving them to go to Jerusalem because the Holy Spirit has led in that direction. He is bound, much as a prisoner is bound. He has no choice but to go. He has no idea what awaits him in Jerusalem but that is not really important. He does not have to know all that the future holds. Even if there is more suffering and ultimately prison, that cannot deter him. He has already suffered a great deal for the gospel's sake. He has never counted his life more precious than his Lord's. To him, self preservation is certainly not the first law of life. He has had experiences in every city along the way that verify the fact that even though he suffers as a prisoner he is within the Lord's will. Nor has the suffering diminished his joy. He is more determined than ever to finish the course of his life as a faithful minister of the gospel.

As Paul came to the final part of his talk with them, he realized that he would never see most of them again. This would in truth be a final farewell. It must have been a traumatic experience. As he sat there looking in their faces he said, "my conscience is clear, I have never failed to declare God's message to you. If any of you are still lost, the responsibility is yours. I have done my best to point you to Christ who saves." Then he turned to those who were the leaders and teachers in the church and admonished them to follow his example in faithfully feeding the flock. He reminded them that Christ had purchased the church with his own blood and that knowledge should certainly affect the way they treated it.

So often we study a lesson in an abstract fashion. We talk about the things happening in the past as

historical events and treat them as an interesting story to tell or listen to. In that respect we get very little out of the lesson. No matter how interesting the study may be, or how well it is presented, unless there is a lesson that can be applied in our lives there is no real learning experience. Such is the case here.

Paul was dealing with a local church just like ours. Its membership was different in that most of the people were Jews. And they probably had no building but had meetings in their homes. But all of them had been saved by faith in Christ. What Paul said to them is certainly applicable to us.

First then, the church was purchased with Christ's blood. We need to treat it like that. If it was worth that to God, it must be tremendously important to him. It is worthy of our very best in time, with our talent, and with our money. If we really believe our church was worth that to God we could not treat it as some people do. They treat it as they do because to them it is just another organization on a par with other organizations to which they belong. The church is not just an organization. It is a body of believers purchased with the blood of Christ. It deserves to be treated like its worth.

In the light of that then, Paul admonishes that we be careful to feed the flock over which God made us overseers. This is figurative language. Paul is saying minister to the people. In our preaching, teaching, visiting, and seeking to win; we are ministering to people. In our sharing with physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, we are ministering to people. We are Christ's representatives. Whatever the needs of the people are, we are to seek to meet

those needs as Christ would. This is the ministry of the local church of which we are a part. Jesus said, "Whatsoever ye have done unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." We need to make sure our church is ministering to people as Christ would be personally ministering to them in his name.

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November 29, 1984

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Lottie Moon Christmas Offering gets bargain with new Nepal work

By Irma Duke

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—The biggest bargain in modern missions may have happened with part of last year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering—a new missionary couple opened work in Nepal for only \$1,600.

Their total operating budget for 1984 was \$5,000. Of course that doesn't include their salaries, but, even at that, it's still a bargain. The money is providing them with living and working accommodations.

The Wayne Thorpes, a doctor and nutritionist, are working under the United Mission of Nepal. Upon their arrival, Thorpe immediately started working in a 100-bed hospital and Mrs. Thorpe started teaching English. After their language study, the Thorpes hope to move to a rural area where they can concentrate their work among the Nepalese. He wants to be involved in curative and preventive medicine and she hopes to work alongside him using her nutrition background.

Setting up the Nepal mission so cheaply is definitely an exception. Normally the costs of setting up a new mission include missionary housing, office space, office equipment and automobile purchases. In recent years, much of the capital expenditures from the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering has been used for setting up new work in new missions and in new areas of established mission work. However, in this case no capital was needed.

In Ecuador, an established area of work, the 1983 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering provided \$25,000 for redevelopment of La Merced camp. La Merced was the site for two Royal Ambassador/Girls Auxiliary camps last year with 382 attending. One hundred boys and girls made professions of faith in Jesus Christ. Seventy indicated they felt that God wanted to use them in full-time service, or were willing if God did want them.

In addition to enlarging the camp ministry, La Merced is being expanded to include a seminary which previously met in a church in Quito. This seminary expansion is needed to help train more leaders. Ecuadorean Baptists now have 192 churches and mission points and 94 national pastors. They hope to grow from 4,000 members to 2 million by the year 2000.

In West Africa, a pastors' school is "getting off the ground," according to area administrator John Mills, because of last year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. More than \$67,000 was appropriated for a married student dormitory for Owerri Baptist Bible College in Nigeria earlier this year. Mills said these funds had been requested for three years.

The theologian school, according to Mills, has potential, but numbers have been limited by facilities. This

appropriation will help to pay for the land and dorm and the Nigerian Baptist Convention will help pay operating expenses.

In another established but growing area of missions work, almost \$200,000 was appropriated for missionary housing. In Bourkina Fasso (formerly Upper Volta), two duplexes and some single family dwellings are being built for new personnel. One of the new families is the Glen Suttons in Tiebele, a new mission station near Ghana. After the language study completion, Sutton will be an agricultural evangelist and will be helping local farmers improve their methods, thereby improving their yields.

Communication among Southern Baptist missionaries in Tanzania will be easier because of last year's Lottie Moon offering. Very little gas is available in the country, telephones are down often and repair is slow or nonexistent. And since local mail takes a month, mission work has been hampered because of lack of communication among the 16 stations where more than 75 missionaries live. The \$15,000 received this year will provide HAM radio-type communication between the mission stations in the country, which is a third larger than Texas.

Almost \$60,000 has been appropriated for communications ministries in Colombia where it's impossible to get Baptist programming on the government-operated television system. Southern Baptist missionaries and Colombians are using religious videotapes to stimulate home Bible studies. Twenty-six groups have been organized, resulting in more than 2,000 decisions for Christ. This money will help to continue those ministries.

Members of one of the churches canvassed a neighborhood park over a period of time, giving testimonies and then inviting people to the church's evening worship. During this time, they had 450 new people attend their church and saw 22 professions of faith. Another church presented the videotapes in a business school that one of its members attends. During the presentations, more than 30 people made decisions for Christ.

Many other things are happenings because of Southern Baptists' giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering—new churches and chapels, new hospital wings, audiovisual supplies, and missionary housing and cars. But some others had to be put on the waiting list because the offering ran close to \$2 million short of the \$60 million budgeted goal.

Missionaries in the tiny country of Belize asked for \$30,000 for a new bookstore ministry but were turned down. They also asked for \$15,000 for churches and chapels but the money was not available.

The Caribbean Baptist Fellowship publications ministry which provides English-language literature for all the countries in the Caribbean did not get \$23,000 requested for new equipment. Nor did missionaries in Mexico get the \$50,000 they requested for seminary construction.

The Colombia mission requested money for eight chapels. Three of the churches had been on the needs list since 1982. Only one of the requests was met.

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"Because I love him"

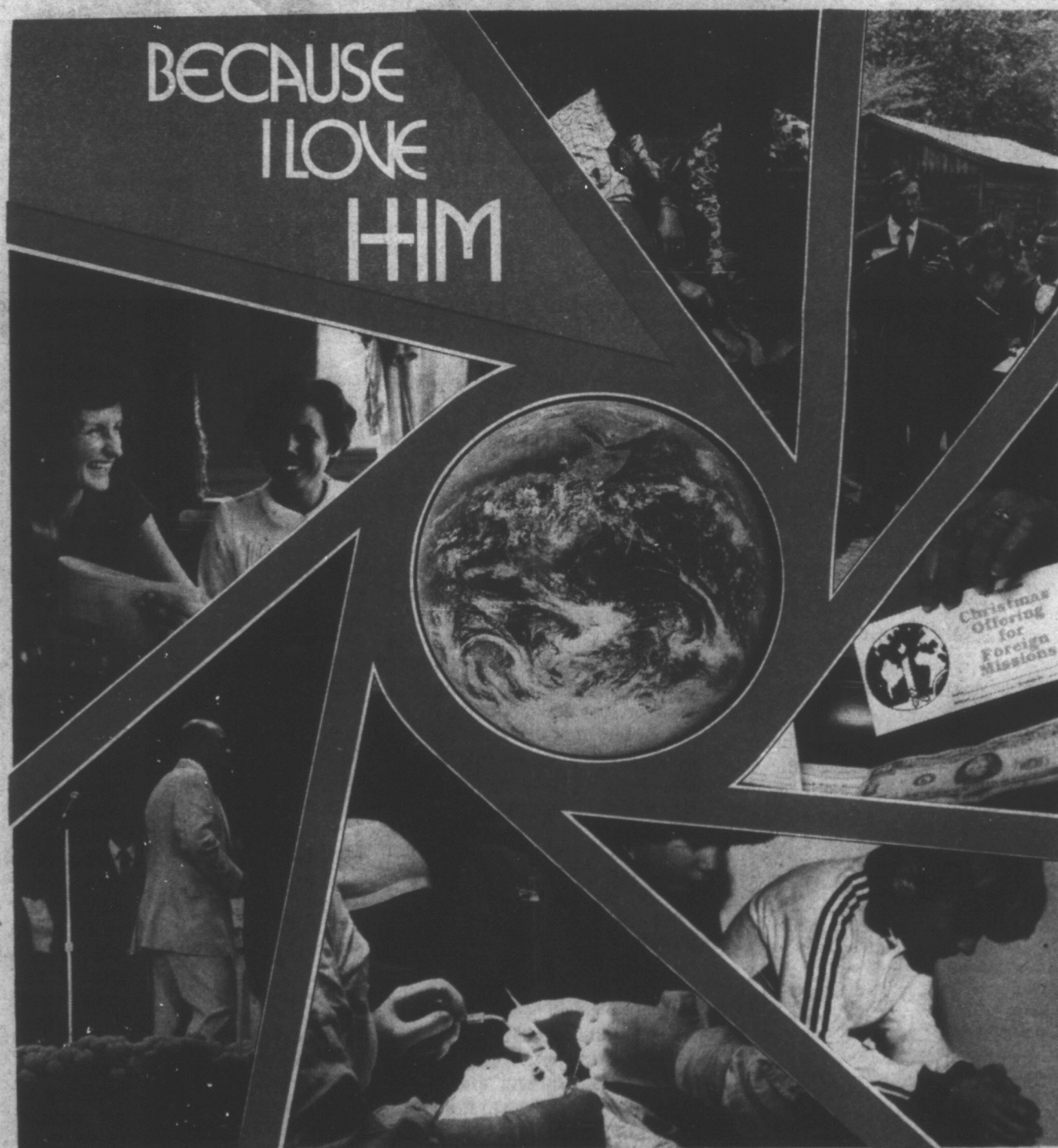
Missionaries, laypeople
to spice FMB teleconference, Page 3

New Testaments in '85 for Czechoslovakia

STUTTGART—An import license for 50,000 New Testaments with colour illustrations has been obtained by the Czech Ecumenical Council in Prague. The books will be supplied by the United Bible Societies, probably during the coming year.

Large format New Testaments with colour illustrations have already appeared in a number of languages.

Because of their popularity in Hungary and Poland, such New Testaments have been reprinted several times in each country, UBS Report said. The Czech council also had a permit to import 120,000 Bibles and 2,000 New Testaments during 1984. The Bibles have already been distributed among the member churches.



WEEK OF PRAYER FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS
DECEMBER 2-9, 1984

LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING
NATIONAL GOAL: \$66,000,000

Editorials.....by don mcgregor

Missions is up to us

"Because I Love Him" is the theme for the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions for 1984. The Week of Prayer for this year is Dec. 2 to 9.

The scripture basis for the Week of Prayer theme is John 14:15, which says simply, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The Week of Prayer and the accompanying Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions will be Southern Baptists' response to that scriptural injunction. Because we love him we will bathe the foreign missions effort in fervent prayer, because we love him we will participate in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to the best of our ability.

The national goal for the offering is \$66 million.

This is not enough. It had to be scaled back because a lack of ample income last year made thinking of a larger goal impractical. So it goes without saying that every dollar of the 1984 goal is needed for an effective witness in more than 100 nations overseas.

Historically, about one-half of the Foreign Missions Board's income is from the proceeds of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The major source of the other half is the Cooperative Program.

It will take a lot of money to reach the goal. It will take \$66 million, and that is a lot. But it takes a lot of money to run a witnessing operation in more than 100 countries all over the world.

We have a choice. We can pay the money, or we can stop witnessing. If we are to be guided by the theme scripture, however, we don't seem to have much choice. It says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." That seems plain enough. So what are the commandments?

We can all just about quote one of

them by heart. It says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: . . ." There it is again. He says, "Go out and do the things I've told you to do." He doesn't say, "If you can scrape up the money somehow, see if you can get somebody to go."

He doesn't even mention the money. He simply says, "Go." And it doesn't take much deliberation for us to determine that if we are going to go, or if we are going to pay for somebody else to go, we are going to have to raise some money . . . a lot of it.

There is always an accounting in Southern Baptist finances. Southern Baptists face no prospect of giving money and then wondering how much of it was used as was indicated. It is accounted for. And of the \$66 million of the Lottie Moon Offering, \$39,854,000 will be used for operating expenses.

The major figure in the operating expenses is basic support for 1,600 missionaries. That total is \$13,768,000. Operating also includes the missionary pension plan at a figure of \$5.5 million. That is a vital item. After these heroes of the faith have spent

their lives in overseas assignments and have had limited opportunity to provide for their retirement years, we need to take care of their needs. Housing allowance is figured to take \$3,237,000, and longevity allowance will take \$2 million.

In addition to the general operating expenses, operating expenses on eight fields call for \$19,571,000. These are Europe and the Middle East, \$2,960,000; South and Southeast Asia, \$2.3 million; East Asia, \$3.3 million; Eastern South America, \$2,960,000; Middle America and the Caribbean, \$2.3 million; West Africa, \$2 million; Eastern and Southern Africa, \$2.3 million; and Western South America, \$1,451,000.

Pretty generally, these are the items in the budget: language study, missionary housing, evangelism and church development, special evangelistic emphasis, mass communications, audio-visuals, Baptist men's work, new work, aid to churches, and religious education such as Sunday School and Church Training. These things and others like them are being attended to and great things accomplished because of it around the world day after day. It is our expert and dedicated foreign missions team at work doing well what they know to do.

During the Mississippi Baptist Convention, which was held a couple of weeks ago, some attention was given in the newspapers and by interested parties to the missions gifts of Mississippi Baptists through the Cooperative Program for 1984.

Some observers had presented the possibility that the influence of Charles Stanley, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was having its effect. At the time Stanley was elected, his church, First Church, Atlanta, was giving 2.1 percent of its income through the Cooperative Program. A few months following his election, Stanley noted that he had asked the church to increase its Cooperative Program gifts to 5 percent.

A reporter asked this writer what effect I felt the Stanley influence might be having. At the end of September it appeared that the Mississippi Baptist Cooperative Program gifts might be more than \$500,000 below the budget for the period.

It needs to be pointed out here, by the way, that an annual budget is just that — an annual budget, and cannot be accurately measured at mileposts along the way because of varying circumstances. If, for instance, the month ends on Sunday as September did, or even Monday or Tuesday, all of a church's missions gifts for the month cannot reach the office of the treasurer in time to be counted for the month.

October was a record-setting month in Cooperative Program giving. This was due in part to the fact that September ended on Sunday. Other

months have ended on Sunday in the past, however, and the fact remains that there was more Cooperative Program income in Mississippi in October than ever before in history. The total was \$1,620,284. That was an increase of \$585,678 over the same month of 1983. In fairness it must be noted that in 1983 September ended on Friday. But again, that does not take away from the fact that October was the greatest month ever in missions giving.

Through 10 months of 1983, the income was \$12,310,619. Through the same period of 1984 the income was \$13,411,536. That is an increase of \$1,100,917 through the 10 months; and

the 10 months' figure, no doubt, was a record amount also.

The budget for 1984 is large. It is \$16,485,000. That is \$1,140,000 more than the 1983 budget of \$15,071,000. Maybe the 1984 budget is larger than it needs to be, but there is no way of determining what the income will be when the budget is prepared. And 1984 is not over.

Mississippi Baptists are still supporting worldwide missions efforts with their gifts. They are doing so at a greater pace than ever before. Let's hope and let's pray that all of the commotion that is surrounding the dispute among Southern Baptists will not cause Mississippi Baptists to neglect

statement in that commandment, "and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

That also seems plain enough. He will be there. The only way we can fail is to fail to provide the money so no one can go and to fail to pray for those who go so that they may work effectively.

Our missions effort is in our hands.

Join Southern Baptists



Hear missionaries, meet national missions leaders, learn more about foreign missions

"Because I Love Him"

December 1, 1984

1:00-2:30 EST

over BTN

Contact associational office for locations

Record-setting missions support

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Guest opinion . . .

The Southern Baptist future

By Owen Cooper

ed 6,000 persons in one day — twice the number at Pentecost." Only five countries in the world now have more Baptists than Burma.

What about the future of the SBC? It, too, is as bright as the promises of God. "If those among my people called Southern Baptists shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and shall turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven; and will forgive their transgressions, and will heal their convention."

Will the SBC divide? No! There will be churches on the left whose stream

of theological thought becomes so broad and shallow that it is powerless. Some of these churches will drop out. There will be churches on the right whose stream of theological thought will become so narrow and restricted that they subscribe only to an authoritarian application of the scriptures. Some of these churches will also drop out. But the great body of Southern Baptist churches will still give evangelism and missions primacy in preaching and priority in practice. This will provide the tie that will continue to bind them together in (Continued on page 8)

An eight-part series
Part 8

The Baptist Record

Missionaries, laypeople to spice Foreign Missions Teleconference

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A mixture of interviews with missionaries, including two from Mississippi; agency executives; and church people plus opportunities for viewers to ask their own questions will spice the first Foreign Missions Teleconference Dec. 1.

Broadcast live over Baptist Telecommunication Network from 1 to 2:30 p.m. EST, the teleconference will kick off the annual Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions.

Missionaries from Tanzania, Spain, Uruguay, Japan, and Israel plus a North Carolina layman, a Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union leader and a West Virginia pastor will join WMU Executive Director Carolyn

Weatherford, Brotherhood Director James Smith and Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks for a program focused on praying and giving.

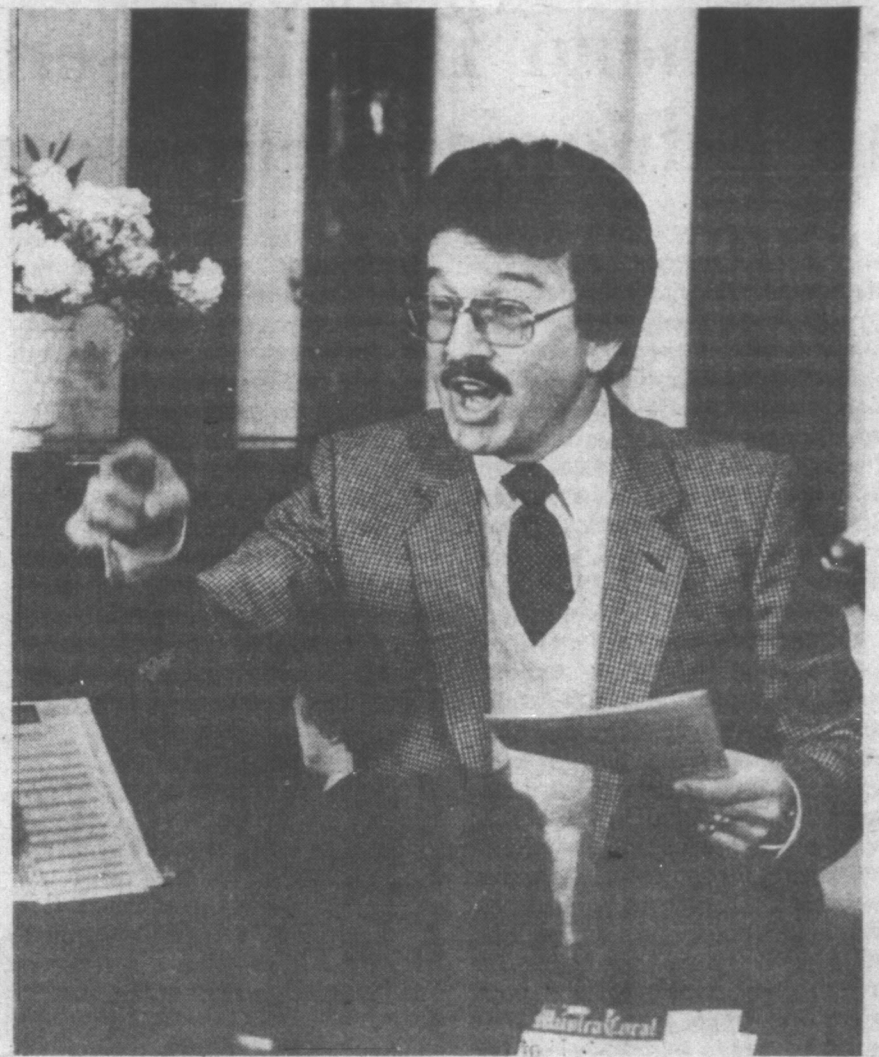
Wes Lytton, a layman from Monticello Baptist Church, Statesville, N.C., who used to say, "Lord, I can't do anything," will share some of the warm experiences he's had on numerous overseas missions trips where he learned there was plenty he could do as a volunteer.

Lawrence Stewart, pastor of First Southern Baptist Chapel of Grandview, Beckley, W. Va., will relate the joy of having his 28-member congregation exceed their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal by 15 percent

while only four members were holding full-time jobs. Martie Perkins, a WMU leader at her church in Moss Point, Miss., also will be part of the program.

Missionaries Doug and Evelyn Knapp from Tanzania and Mike and Dalia Gonzales from Spain will be in the studio for live interviews. During the program, phone connections will be attempted with John and Kathy McNair in Uruguay, Dale and Anita Thorne in Israel, and Robert and Helen Sherer, emeritus missionaries from Japan.

Viewers at approximately 90 broadcast locations in 24 states also will have the opportunity to phone in questions through a toll-free number.



MISSISSIPPIAN COMBINING MUSIC AND MEDICINE — John McNair fulfills his love for music, for medicine and for God, in Uruguay where he is a Southern Baptist missionary. The Magee native is a student and youth worker in Montevideo, Uruguay, where he serves as a professor in the school of medicine in the only university in the country. He also serves as co-director of the Laboratory of Brain Research. And, as shown here, he gets to lead the choir at Pargue Posada Baptist Church. Your giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering helps to make all this possible. (FMB) PHOTO By Van Payne.

Convention names campaign committee

A 38-person campaign committee for Mississippi Baptists' \$40 million endowment campaign for three colleges and the Children's Village was named by the Mississippi Baptist Convention when it voted to proceed with the campaign.

The campaign begins immediately and lasts until 1990 for Mississippi College, William Carey College, and Blue Mountain College, as well as the Children's Village.

Those who have been named to serve on the committee are as follows:

William B. Alexander Jr., Cleveland; Sherwood Bailey, Gulfport; Owen Cooper, Yazoo City; William R. Crabill, Marks; Elise M. Curtis, Gulfport; Joe Dale, Prentiss; E'Wilda T. Fancher, Coffeeville; L. Edward Gandy, Kosciusko; Frank Gunn, Biloxi; T. M. Hederman Sr., Jackson; Gene Henderson, Greenville; Alvis Hunt, Jackson; Carolyn Kee, Woodville; Earl Kelly, Jackson; Ben Allen Kitchens, New Albany; James A. Lambuth, McComb; Harry L. Lucenay, Hattiesburg; Howard L. McMillan Jr., Jackson; Jean Mitchell, Louisville; Fannie H. Peeples, Vicksburg; Richie E. Perkins, Moss Point; Charles W. Pickering, Laurel; H. David (Doc) Roberts, Hattiesburg; Dell Scoper, Laurel; Robert E. Self, Brookhaven; Leland R. Speed, Jackson; Jack Stack, Meridian; John D. Thomas, Hattiesburg; Joe H. Tuten, Jackson; Harry E. Vickery, Greenville; J. Heywood Washburn, Tupelo; Aven Whittington, Greenwood; and J. Kelly Williams, Jackson.

The executive committee of the campaign committee is made up of Alexander, Cooper, Hederman, Hunt, Kelly, Peeples, Pickering, Speed,

(Continued on page 4)

Because You Love Him



Dare To Love Them

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
National Goal: \$66,000,000
Week Of Prayer For Foreign Missions
December 2-9, 1984

Baptists struggle to relieve suffering in Mexico disaster

MEXICO CITY (BP) — Mexican Baptists and Southern Baptist representatives in Mexico City scrambled Nov. 20 to provide help as the death toll from the previous day's natural gas explosions and fires passed 300.

"We have a Baptist doctor who's in charge of treating 200 burn patients at a Lions Club (in the disaster area)," reported David Daniell, Southern Baptist relief coordinator for Mexico. "We've chosen to work through him in providing medical supplies. The Baptist student center at the national university is providing

blankets."

Daniell said Mexican Baptists had issued an appeal for blood donors and Southern Baptist representatives were requesting disaster relief funds from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Representatives who tried to donate blood on the evening of the disaster were turned away because of an overwhelming number of volunteers, he said.

Four Baptist churches and four mission points are located in the vicinity of the disaster, as well as a medical clinic sponsored by First

(Continued on page 4)

Ministers to get new retirement plan

DALLAS (BP) — State conventions aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention unanimously approved in their fall meetings the allocation of Cooperative Program funds to a new retirement plan for ministers, but they were divided on the inclusion of church employees.

Thirteen state conventions, including Mississippi, adopted the version of the new Church Annuity Plan which will channel these funds into the retirement accounts of ministers and employees serving churches which cooperate with the state convention.

Effective Jan. 1, 1988, the plan will contain a matching feature which will allow ministers the possibility of generating three dollars for each dollar they contribute. The church will match the individual's initial contribution on a two-for-one basis, up to 10 percent of pay. After the required contributions are made by the individual and the church, the state convention will match one-half of the church's contributions up to \$35 per month for each participant.

All contributions made by the member and the church will be channeled to the member's account. The first \$210 contributed each year by the state convention will fund supplemental disability and survivor benefits for the member. All monies exceeding \$210 will be added to the member's retirement income account.

Lay employees will be afforded the same matching feature if they work 20 hours per week and have been employed by the church three years. Those conventions that did not vote to include the lay employees in 1988 will include them no later than 1998.

The new plan is designed to improve retirement benefits for those persons who devote their lives to serving Southern Baptist churches.

State conventions which voted to include ministers and lay employees in 1988 are: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New England, New York, Northern Plains, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Wyoming.

The conventions which voted to make only ministers eligible for state contributions are: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas-Nebraska, Maryland/Delaware, Michigan, Minnesota/Wisconsin, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Northwest, Ohio, Pennsylvania/South Jersey, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah/Idaho and West Virginia. The Hawaii convention is expected to complete the state convention adoption process next March.

The adoption of the new retirement plan by the churches is set for 1986 so ministers and eligible employees may enroll by Jan. 1, 1988.

Southern Baptists send \$50,000 to Ethiopia, study ways to help

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists have sent \$50,000 to Ethiopia for famine relief and will send a team to explore other ways they can help alleviate hunger there.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board wired the money to help missionaries assist other evangelicals who are feeding about 10,000 people daily around Walata in southwestern Ethiopia. The money should help feed another 15,000 each day, said John Cheyne, the board's relief specialist.

Cheyne expected to leave Nov. 23 with one or two other staffers to help Ethiopia missionaries explore creative ways to help with famine relief in spite of a small mission staff and other limitations.

The Foreign Mission Board has spent more than \$3 million for African relief and development during 1984 and expects to send another \$3 million during 1985 as Southern Baptists contribute the funds, said Cheyne. Most relief agencies are predicting the drought will continue next year, becoming even worse in some countries.

About a fourth of the board's worldwide relief allocations this year — more than \$1.7 million — has gone for food distribution in African countries such as Mali, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

In recent years Southern Baptist church members have given about \$6 million a year for worldwide hunger and relief. Because they already had given to help such needs, the Foreign Mission Board was able to send the \$50,000 the same day missionaries requested it, said R. Keith Parks, board president.

Southern Baptists who give for hunger relief can be sure their money will be used for that because they've already given through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to provide the system of missionaries through which such relief can be administered, said Parks.

The Foreign Mission Board is far more than a relief agency, he said. Southern Baptist missionaries make a day-in, day-out commitment to live among a people, to offer spiritual and physical ministries which can help transform their lives.

Thirty to 70 Southern Baptists a day — torn by television reports of the Ethiopia famine — have been calling the Foreign Mission Board since the end of October asking how they can help. They have given more than \$5,700 designated for Ethiopian relief this year and much more for African relief. In addition, the Northwest Baptist Convention, in its annual meeting Nov. 13-15, took a special offering for Ethiopian relief, collecting \$886.

Ethiopia is suffering some of the worst famine in Africa, but more than 20 African nations are suffering critical food shortages this year. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization already has listed 11 countries where it expects food shortages next year and predicts that list will grow.

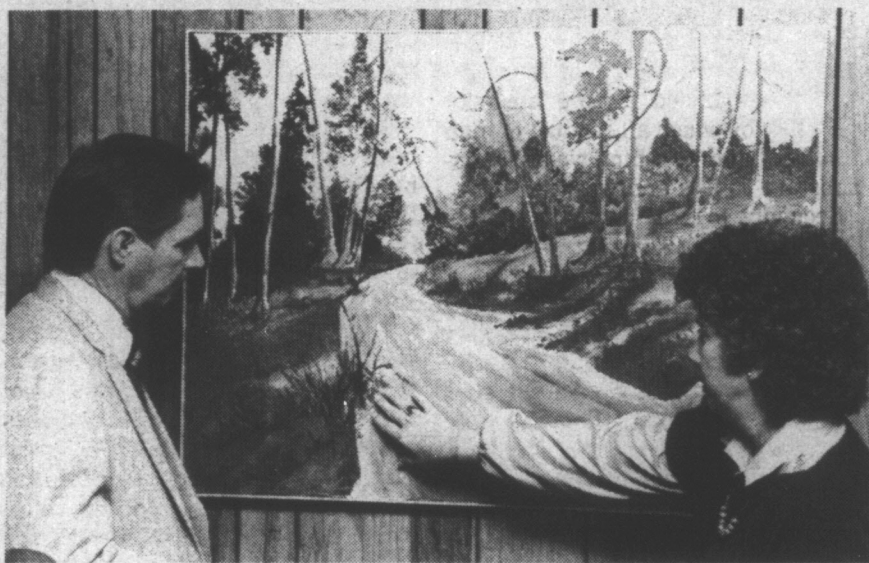
Southern Baptist missionaries in Ethiopia have been trying to find a way to minister to drought victims in

the countryside for the past two months, said Davis Saunders, the board's director for Eastern and Southern Africa. Because the government in recent years has restricted their work to the area of Addis Ababa, the capital, they decided to cooperate with evangelicals already working in the southwest. Food is available to most people in Addis.

"Development must be a big part of what we do," said Saunders, who pointed out missionaries have been involved in development since beginning work in Ethiopia in 1967. Jerry Bedsole, a veterinarian, and Lynn Groce, an agriculturalist, help train

Ethiopians in skills essential for feeding their country.

Southern Baptist personnel in Ethiopia include three missionary couples: Lynn and Suzanne Groce of Garden City, Mo., and Tampa, Fla., respectively; Jerry and Rosie Bedsole of Thomaston, Ala., and Spitlog, Mo., and Troy and Jewell Waldron of Silver Spring, Md. Journeyman Mary Lou Jackson of Amsterdam, Mo., and special assignment worker John Lawrence of Minden, La., are also in Ethiopia. One other couple, Ray and Lauralee Lindholm, of Lemoore and San Luis Obispo, Calif., respectively, are on furlough in Dallas.



Painting will decorate new book

Jerry Mixon and church secretary Jo Williams, examine Jean Abrams' painting of a country road. Jean is the wife of Joe Abrams, minister of music for First Church, Winona, and daughter-in-law of Joe Abrams, former associate editor of the *Baptist Record*. Mixon said he hopes this painting will be selected to appear on the jacket cover for his book, *OFF THE MAIN ROAD*. Broadman Press has scheduled publication of his book in 1985. Mixon is pastor of First Church, Winona.

Arkansans hear apology for alien immersion

FORT SMITH, Ark. (BP) — Arkansas Baptists, meeting in their 131st annual session, approved a Partnership Mission project with two Brazilian conventions, adopted an \$11.5 million Cooperative Program budget and heard the pastor of one congregation ask forgiveness and reconciliation for his church's practice of alien immersion.

Steven Davis, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Russellville, stood before messengers in the first moments of the annual meeting and apologized to the convention for a 1965 incident which has prevented seating of messengers from the church off and on for 19 years.

The congregation, under a previous pastor, had accepted into membership a woman not baptized in a Baptist church. The resulting controversy over "alien immersion" has kept the church from regular seating and full fellowship in their association and the state convention since 1965. This year, the church's messengers were received into both meetings.

The constitution of the state convention prohibits churches which practice alien immersion or open commu-

nion from having messengers seated at the annual meeting.

Apologizing for offending the sister churches, Davis declared, "Our church does not practice alien immersion, and does not plan to practice alien immersion." As Davis left the platform, messengers rose to give him a standing ovation.

Unified by the apology, messengers proceeded to adopt a Partnership Mission project which will pair Arkansas Baptist churches with Baptist congregations in two Brazilian conventions along the Amazon.

Two resolutions sparked notable discussions. One affirmed the Baptist position for separation of church and state.

A second resolution affirmed "the equality of men and women before God."

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Christians are victims of guerilla warfare in Peru

AYACUCHO STATE, PERU (EP) — Church groups, including Food for the Hungry, are providing emergency funds to victims of escalating guerilla warfare by a communist terrorist group in central Peru. The situation is at a crisis stage, according to Robert Thorp, Food for the Hungry's project director in Peru.

Hundreds are flocking to other cities. The hospitals are full. Even the floors are being used, and medicines are gone," said Thorp. "Most of these are Christians. Churches have been bombed with hundreds injured. One church group has lost six pastors and fifty men from one congregation. I know of thirty to fifty families killed trying to leave the area."

Ayacucho state is in the remote Andes Mountains region of Central Peru. A terrorist group known as the Maoist Shining Light has been fighting the government there for four years. Several thousand people have been killed, and acts of violence against Christian groups have accelerated in recent months. Evangelization has been banned by the guerillas, and church leaders say it is dangerous to even carry a Bible.

Food for the Hungry, the National Evangelical Church in Peru, and the Mennonite Church have provided food and medical aid to refugees, and helped in resettlement.

Disaster in Mexico . . .

(Continued from page 3)

Baptist Church of Mexico City. But all clinic personnel were evacuated along with some 100,000 other people in the working-class neighborhoods around the fuel tanks which exploded Nov. 19. The area was still sealed off Nov. 20 and no reports had been received on Baptist families and churches in the area, Daniell said.

Seventeen Southern Baptist families live in Mexico City, but the closest Southern Baptist residence to the disaster area is about 15 miles away. Southern Baptist representatives James and Jurhee Philpot saw the fires from their window.

"From 6 (a.m.) to almost 8 we were able to see the fire up in the sky burning," Mrs. Philpot said. "The explosion didn't awaken us. We were already awake. But we're on an (earthquake) fault and I thought it

was an earthquake because it was so great. So I looked up to see if the light fixtures were moving and they were not . . . There must have been at least five (big) explosions that we heard, and a lot of smaller ones."

Campaign committee

(Continued from page 3)

Stack, Thomas, and Tuten.

Ex-officio members are E. Harold Fisher, president of Blue Mountain College; Lewis Nobles, president of Mississippi College; J. Ralph Noonkester, president of William Carey College; Paul N. Nunnery, executive director of the Children's Village; and Fred E. Beeson, who represents Ketchum Inc., the fund-raising company.

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Mississippi Baptist Convention . . . President's address

"God will hold us accountable..."

By Charles Pickering

When the children of Israel started into the promised land, they faced a great opportunity but a difficult task. Joshua on that occasion challenged them. Let me read from Joshua 24, verses 14 and 15: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

In order that we might be able to be used of God and be in the center of His will, I want to share with you some heartfelt convictions that I have.

The first conviction that I would share with you is that we as Southern Baptists should lead the way in strengthening traditional moral values in America.

This is necessary because in recent years we have seen an erosion of traditional moral values and the establishment of a set of false and counterfeit values. This is not a sudden occurrence. It has been gradually happening since the end of World War II. We do not think so much about it today because we have grown accustomed to it, and this is a dangerous thing to happen.

We ought to teach and preach that moral conduct is acceptable or not acceptable according to the teachings of God. The church must firmly establish in the minds of its members a code of conduct, based upon biblical authority, as to how we should live. The alternative to an immoral lifestyle is the satisfying life of a committed Christian as taught by the New Testament. This ought to be positively etched into the minds of our members so that they can know and find the genuine and satisfying fulfillment of a committed Christian life.

Obedience to God's commands promotes mental, social, and physical well being. God created man, He knows what our needs are, and He knew what He was doing when He established guidelines for our conduct.

If we are to be in the center of God's will, we must lead our nation back to traditional moral and family values. It is a responsibility that we cannot shirk and one from which we must not retreat. In order to do this, our local churches must remain strong; and that brings me to my second conviction.

The second conviction that I would share with you today is that our local Southern Baptist churches should remain strong and vibrant. A church that is strong and vibrant can influence the society around it. But a church that is not strong and vibrant cannot effectively carry out the commands of God and certainly cannot help re-establish traditional moral values in our society.



Pickering

If one looks back historically, it is evident that the movement of Christianity is much like a tidal wave. It comes into an area, stays awhile, and then moves to another part of the earth. If our local churches are to remain strong and vibrant, we must resist the tide of history, the natural inclination of man, and the work of Satan.

The South is now known as the Bible Belt. What must we do to keep our churches strong and vibrant and to prevent the same thing from happening in our area that happened in other areas.

Clearly our churches must remain Bible-centered to the strong and vibrant. Great and strong churches are praying churches; they are loving churches that recognize the necessity for a warm fellowship in which Christians can grow and mature. A church which endures and remains strong and vibrant is a church that does not teach that the Christian life is easy. A great church teaches discipline and commitment and that God sometimes requires sacrificial living.

Strong churches are also mission minded and evangelical. I believe a church that is not mission minded and is not evangelical is a church that is dying. If we are to be in the center of God's will, our local churches must remain strong and vibrant.

The third conviction that I would share with you is a conviction that we as Southern Baptists must remain united to do God's work. Throughout our 139 year history we have been united, we have cooperated, we have worked in harmony, and our local churches have grown strong and vibrant. What God has done through Southern Baptists, what God is now doing through Southern Baptists, and what God can do through Southern Baptists with the opportunities that are before us, clearly indicate to me the need for us to remain in harmony, united and working together to accomplish God's work. We must constantly remind ourselves that what we are doing is not our work but God's work.

How can we remain united to do God's work? I suggest to you that there are several ways that this can be done.

First, we can teach and preach God's word. I believe that the Bible is God's word. I believe that it is inspired, that it is authoritative, and that it is God's revelation to man. Paul, Peter, and John, all three, wrote that scripture comes from God, not man. I believe that the Bible is "truth, without any mixture of error," as Southern Baptists have declared on two separate occasions when we adopted confessions of faith.

Although I believe that what one believes about the Bible is important, it does not bother me if someone else describes the Bible in different terminology than I do as long as the Bible is recognized as the absolute authority by which all conduct of man is judged and by which we as Christians are to live and witness.

Secondly, to remain united I believe we must stop infighting. In I Cor. 14:33 Paul wrote "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." God is not the author of disunity in His church. We should not insist that everyone interpret the Bible as we do. We need to remember that God, not any of us, will have the last word.

I have read the literature on the questions now being discussed in our denomination. I have read our history as Southern Baptists. There are so many things we have in common and so few things that divide and separate us. We must always remember that Satan is our common adversary.

A third thing that we can do to remain united in spirit and purpose is to pray together. God is still in the business of answering prayer. The Bible assures us of this. We ought to be doing more praying and less talking.

We need one another and we need to be united in order to serve God effectively. I do not believe this is too much to ask when the stakes are so high and our responsibility so great and worthwhile.

The fourth conviction I have is that we ought to be strongly supporting our cooperative mission programs. Nothing produces unity more quickly than working together to support a worthy mission program.

Today the world has a population of four and one half billion people. Only one billion, or 22.5 percent, are professing Christians. This means that 3.5 billion people in the world today are not Christians; 2.7 billion of these people have never even heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, and 85 percent of these who have never heard of Christ have no one in their culture who can reach them.

In the United States we have a population of 232 million people. Thirty-one percent, or 72 million people in the United States, are not affiliated with any church, and need to know Jesus Christ.

The imperative nature of our mission responsibility is vividly portrayed in the life, works and teaching of Jesus. Immediately after Jesus began His public ministry. He called His disciples to become "fishers of men." Jesus concluded His public

ministry giving us the Great Commission, telling us to go, to share His Word, to share His love, and to proclaim the gospel of salvation to all the world. The fact that Jesus, at the start of his ministry and at the conclusion of His ministry, commanded us to share the gospel, illustrates the importance Jesus attached to missionary and evangelical activity. In the New American Standard Bible Matthew 28:19 is translated, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . ." This is a command to do more than baptize. It is a command to preach, to teach, and to stimulate spiritual growth that will affect the way people live their lives.

Southern Baptists have always been committed to foreign and home missions. In fact the Foreign and Home Mission boards were the only two boards authorized at the very first Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

Today Southern Baptists are doing several things to meet our responsibility and challenges in the area of missions. In 1976, Southern Baptists adopted the Bold Mission program with the stated purpose of preaching the gospel to every person in his native tongue by the year 2000. The Bold Mission Thrust epitomizes William Carey's challenge. He was the father of Baptist foreign missions.

Just last year, in 1983, the Southern Baptist Convention adopted Planned Growth in Giving, a program which hopefully will underwrite and provide the financial resources to carry out the Bold Mission program.

We now have almost 7,000 mis-

sionaries on the field through both the Home and Foreign Mission boards. Through the efforts of our Foreign Mission Board each day we are seeing an average of 400 people accept Christ as their Savior, and through these same efforts we are seeing the organization of four new churches each day in foreign countries. I submit to you that this is a tremendous success story.

Around the world it is evident that millions of people are waiting to hear the gospel. There are several countries in which a million a year are professing Jesus Christ as their Savior. The convicting power of God's Holy Spirit is moving mightily in Korea, China, other parts of Asia, in South America, Africa, and in numerous Communist countries. It is expected that by the year 2000 there will be more Christians in Africa than on any other continent in the world.

To preach the gospel today we have access to satellites and we have a TV ministry. We have the ability to translate and reproduce God's word. We have opportunities that churches in the past never dreamed possible. Oh, that God would kindle in our hearts, sear in our souls, and place a burden upon our minds to do all that we can to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ at home and abroad. God will hold us accountable for what we do with the opportunity that is ours. My prayer is that we will support our mission program so that we might carry out the Great Commission.

Charles Pickering, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, is an attorney in Laurel.

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Behind the scenes at the convention



Sitting and rocking are Jim Didlake, consultant, Brotherhood Department, and Estus Mason, former pastor of First Church, Crystal Springs, now retired.



Steve Jordan, pastor of Hebron Church, Panola County, and his wife, Mary, buy a book at the Baptist Book Store exhibit. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Jordan of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, where he was ordained earlier this year. His mother is an employee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

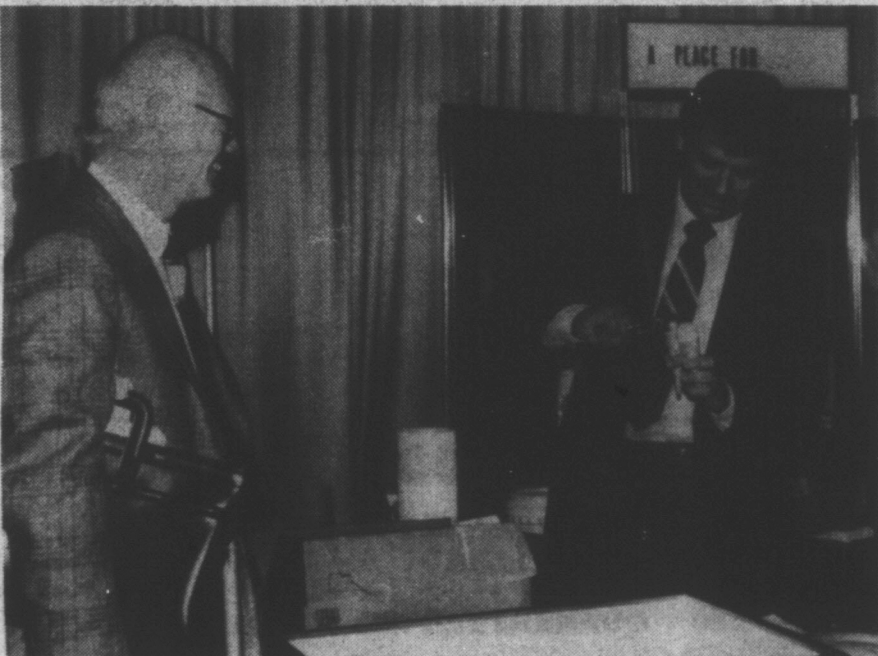


Two presidents

Winfred Moore, left, pastor of First Church, Amarillo, and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was the closing speaker for the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Claude Townsend, a layman and former president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, greets Moore following the closing message.



Charlene Hardy, who is on the staff of Baptist Children's Village, serves punch to Marcus Alexander, center, pastor at First, Flowood. Karl McGraw, also of the Village staff, is at left.



Clarke, the cream of the colleges? Dow Ford, public relations director at Clarke, dips a scoop for Norman Rodgers, consultant, Church Training, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.



Information, please: Greg Stanford, education director at First Church, Magee, checks with Church Information System.



When it's feeding time in the day care center during the convention, Ina Saulters, member of First Church, Jackson, holds the bottle.



Buford Usry, left, pastor at Westwood, Meridian, stops at the Foreign Mission Board exhibit to greet Don Mines, missionary to Argentina.



Mrs. Robert Smira greets convention messengers at the registration desk. At right is Jerry Mixon, pastor of First Church, Winona. Mrs. Smira, member of First Church, Jackson, is a former state president of Woman's Missionary Union.



Keith Williams, consultant, Sunday School Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, serves popcorn to Mrs. Therman Bryant of Clinton. Mrs. Bryant's late husband was serving in the state Cooperative Missions Department at the time of his death. Billy Hudgens, behind Keith, is popping the corn.

Faces And Places

by anne washburn mcwilliams

"Because I Love Him"

On Christmas Eve morning, 1982, Irene Lipscomb and her husband, Jasper, one of their daughters, and two of their grandsons were enroute to Dallas to spend a week with their son and his family.

Irene formerly worked in the Church Training Department. After Jasper retired, they moved to a country home near Mashulaville. While she was still working here in the Baptist Building, she shared this story with Florence Larrimore, who edited it for use in our Building news sheet, "Bits and Pieces."

Irene said they left Jackson early in the morning and stopped in West Monroe, La., for breakfast. Something most unusual, something that expressed the spirit of Christmas, happened to them in that restaurant.

They had ordered breakfast and were eating when the waitress came over to Jasper and said, as she handed him a little note, "Your breakfast has been paid for."

In astonishment, Jasper asked, "What did you say? I'm sure I misunderstood you."

The waitress repeated, "Your breakfast has been paid for, and the person who paid for it wants to remain anonymous."

Many questions raced through their minds. Was it a friend who had seen them there? They knew no one in West Monroe, but had often seen friends from Jackson who in traveling had also found this restaurant to be a nice place to eat. They looked around, but saw no one they recognized.

When they started out, they told the waitress they would love to thank the person for such a nice gesture. "Does the person know us?" they asked.

"No, he does not know you. He comes in quite often. Sometimes, when he has seen a family having a meal, he has done the same for them. His reward was in seeing the expressions on your faces."

In full, the note said, "Your meal has been paid for. Give God the glory for his glorious gift of Jesus Christ and love. Have a merry Christmas and a prosperous and happy new year. With love in Christ."

I thought, "what a nice way to express love at Christmas!"

I love Him because He first loved me. And because I love Him, I love others, the loving and the unloving, the lovely and the unlovely.

Today I decided I want to try to give a special gift of love, for every day in December. Wouldn't it be fun to eat

in a restaurant, pick a family, who does not know me, and watch their faces while the waitress tells them their bill is paid?

How can I eat my Christmas dinner if I don't send a gift for world hunger?

One Christmas, Harry Lucenay, pastor at Temple Church, Hattiesburg, listed in his bulletin, *The Builder*, "Thirteen Gift Suggestions Not Advertised On Television." They fit so perfectly these love gifts that I have in mind, that I'm going to reprint them here. I hope he doesn't mind.

*Give your parents the words, "I love you."

*Give your children a full day of your time.

*Give an ear to someone who needs a listener.

*Give a hand to someone less strong.

*Give an old friend an unexpected visit or write an unexpected letter.

*Give a former neighbor a telephone call.

*Give a kind word to a weary sales clerk.

*Give a prayer for peace for the world.

*Give more gifts you have made; fewer money have bought.

*Give a gift anonymously to someone in need.

*Give yourself time to reflect on the true meaning of this Holy Season.

*Give thanks to God for sending His Son as Redeemer of the world

*Give your greatest gift to Jesus through the Lottie Moon Christmas offering!

Next week is the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions. The theme this year is "Because I Love Him." Because I do, I will bring my gift to Him through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering next Sunday. In that way I can spread my love around the world.

French Baptist youth meet

AMIENS, France — More than 130 young persons gathered at the Baptist church here November 1-4 for the two-yearly Congress of French Baptist youth.

Meeting under the theme of "Word received — word lived," they held Bible studies, meditations, and musical programmes. Two public performances on successive evenings each drew nearly 300 persons, "Bulletin d'Information Protestant" (BIP) said.

Both conservative and fundamental factions of Mississippi Baptists met in Jackson sandwiched around sessions of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Nov. 12-14.

R. Raymond Lloyd, pastor of First Church, Starkville, was elected as coordinator by a core group of conservatives on Tuesday following the evening session of the Convention.

The group is dedicated to wresting the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention away from control by a fundamentalist faction of the convention. Since 1979 a fundamentalist core has been able to influence Southern Baptist Convention presidential elections; and the resulting trustee structures for Southern Baptist institutions has reflected the ability of the president of the convention to influence such bodies through his power to appoint the committee on committees of the Southern Baptist Convention.

There were about 35 who met at a Jackson hotel following the Tuesday evening session. No candidate was discussed other than the possibility that Winfred Moore, pastor of First Church, Amarillo, Texas, and closing speaker at the Mississippi Baptist Convention, might be persuaded to allow his name to be submitted as a nominee. Moore, however, has said that he does not consider himself as a candidate.

The 1985 Southern Baptist Convention will be held in Dallas in June. The group discussed travel and hotel arrangements and proposals for organizing the state to seek to influence churches to name as many messengers as possible and help make arrangements for them to attend the convention.

On the night before, another group met in another Jackson hotel to discuss procedures for maintaining the SBC presidency in the hands of a fundamentalist faction. While this group has a nationwide network for defining actions, there is no visible state organization. On a national scale the fundamental faction has a publication called Southern Baptist Advocate with ties to First Church, Dallas.

Zig Ziglar, layman in First Church, Dallas and first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention, spoke at the Monday evening meeting. This was a dinner meeting held between the afternoon and evening sessions of the convention. While no Baptist Record personnel was invited to this dinner meeting, and none attended, television coverage later that evening indicated that it also was political in nature in that Ziglar used the occasion to again voice his discontent with the fact that Baylor University in Waco, Texas, has a Mormon on the faculty teaching Spanish. This also was a part of the theme of his message to the SBC Pastors' Conference in Kansas City last June. Baylor, of course, has no relationship to either the Southern Baptist Convention or the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

The Baptist Record editor was invited to the Tuesday evening meeting and attended in a news capacity. During this meeting another nationwide publication named *The Call*: Dallas

'85 was announced. It is published in Kentucky, where another group has been organized for similar purposes. It was mailed by Latonia Church, Covington, Ky. Other states also have organized, Lloyd said, notably Georgia and Texas.

Reports were that there were about 300 at the dinner meeting on Monday evening. While the fundamental group began organizing prior to the 1979 convention, the conservative element began to organize following the Kansas City convention last June.

It should be noted that both groups refer to themselves as conservatives, and it probably is an accurate description in both cases. The difference is that one group sees its role as guarding conservatism in education, feeling that such an effort will have a long-ranged and far reaching effect. The other groups is concerned more about the missions outreach of the convention and sees the actions

of the first group as being detrimental to what the missions group feels is the real ministry of the convention.

The fundamental group, on the other hand, feels that the witness of the convention has been diluted and will continue to be so unless what members of the group perceive to be strength in theological education becomes a part of the theological structure at the convention's six seminaries.

The group has produced no instances of problems, at the seminaries, however, except those that have been or are being dealt with. They and other Southern Baptists have complained in recent months about the public statements of seminary presidents in defense of the operations of the seminaries. In instances in which the presidents have spoken, however, the trustee bodies of those seminaries have upheld them.

Devotional

What the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering can mean to our church

By Nathan L. Barber
John 4:35

Strengthened Convictions

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions will strengthen a church's convictions concerning missions in general and foreign missions in particular. The giving of money for anything in Baptist life seems always to stimulate two things: prayer and study. This is good. In praying and studying several things will be accomplished. First, the Biblical imperatives of missions will be reviewed. Second, the staggering needs of "the fields white unto harvest" will be reevaluated. And, third, each church will have to rethink her responsibility in light of the Biblical imperative and the great need.

Increased power

The designation by our Southern Baptist Convention of a Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering should remind each church of the importance of prayer to this emphasis. Without it there will be little impact made and little power experienced.

Intensive prayer, however, will mean increased power for the mission effort abroad. Churches will be interceding for the mission personnel and their needs as well as for the spiritual and material needs of different countries. In addition, there will be praise and thanksgiving for what God has already done. There is power in prayer!

Intensive prayer will mean increased power for the local church, too! Many churches have found that this time of prayer has made many local problems seem less urgent and become very insignificant in light of the world's need of the Gospel. It helps individual churches see themselves as an important part of God's redemptive plan for the world. This aids a church in keeping evangelism and missions as the priority matter.

Call to cooperation and commitment

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering emphasis seems always to remind us that the magnitude of the task is greater than any one of our churches. It underscores the principle of cooperation — that 36,000 churches can do together what one church alone cannot. It challenges us to put aside personal and theological differences and "to press on toward the goal..."

And, finally, this special offering for Foreign Missions renews the call to commitment for individuals, churches, and this great denomination to share Jesus Christ with all people everywhere.

Nathan L. Barber is pastor of First Church, Bay St. Louis.

Mississippi Baptist activities

- Dec. 2-9 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions (WMU Emphasis)
- Dec. 3 Bible Drill Clinic; 7-9 p.m.; Oakland BC, Corinth/FBC, Amory/FBC, Holly Springs (CT)
- Dec. 3-4 Preaching Conference; FBC, Louisville; 2 p.m., 3rd-3:30 p.m., 4th (CAPM)
- Dec. 4 Bible Drill Clinic; 7-9 p.m.; FBC, Philadelphia/FBC, Eupora/FBC, Lexington (CT)
- Dec. 6 Bible Drill Clinic; 7-9 p.m.; Summer BC, Summer/FBC, Shaw/FBC, Bruce (CT)
- Dec. 6-7 Area Coordinators Specialized Training; Central Hills; Noon, 6th-3 p.m. 7th (BRO)

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Committee on Nominations presents new members

The report of the Nominating Committee was brought to the Mississippi Baptist Convention by Bartis Harper, Tylertown, chairman. Other committee members are David Perry, Brookhaven; G. A. McCoy, Picayune; William P. Smith III, Tupelo; and Walter Yeldell, Greenwood. The report was adopted, and the nominees elected.

Persons elected to begin new terms on Mississippi Baptist boards and commissions are listed below.

Convention Board Members.

Term Expires 1985

Jeff Davis, Danny Berry, Prentiss; Lamar, Dennis Smith, Sumrall; Leflore, Duane Jenson, Greenwood; Northwest (Tate), Ed Campbell, Coldwater; Panola, Trent F. Grubbs, Crenshaw; Washington, Dan Robertson, Greenville; Winston, Jimmy Porter, Louisville.

Term Expires 1986

Benton, Troy Wilson Jr., Corinth; Marion, Keith Gordon, Columbia; Riverside (Coahoma), Randol Lindsay, Lyon; Sharkey-Issaquena (Issaquena), John Pepper, Valley Park; Tishomingo, Eugene Walden, Iuka; Yazoo, Al Homer, Yazoo City.

Term Expires 1987

Bolivar, Wayne Gullett, Cleveland; Calhoun, Charles Nestor, Bruce; Chickasaw, Bruce Cappleman, Houlika; Choctaw, L. H. Burris, Weir; Clarke, Albert McMullan, Stonewall; Clay, Tom McCurley, West Point; Copiah, Ray Grillot, Crystal Springs; Covington, Joe Ratcliff, Collins; Franklin, Franklin Haire, Meadville; Gulf Coast (Hancock), Nathan Barber, Bay St. Louis; Gulf Coast (Harrison), Jerry Estes, Gulfport; Gulf Coast (Stone), Jack Parsons, Wiggins; Hinds-Madison (Hinds), W. B. Rives, Jackson; Hinds-Madison (Madison), William Grogan, Canton; Humphreys, Robert Ragland, Belzoni; Jackson, Ray Campbell, Escatawpa; Jones, Larry Kennedy (at large), Laurel; Kemper, Matt Taylor, Preston; Lafayette, Jerry Dale Patterson, Oxford; Leake, Eddie Hamilton, Carthage; Lee, Gayle Alexander (at large), Tupelo; Lee, Larry Otis (at large), Tupelo; Lowndes, Jimmy Harrington, Columbus; Mississippi (Wilkinson), James E. Simeon, Centerville; Neshoba, Grady Collins, Philadelphia; Northwest (Desoto), Ralph Stovall, Walls; Noxubee, H. O. Haywood, Macon; Pike, Harold Fleming,

McComb; Pontotoc, Billy Davis, Ecu; Smith, Jon Doler, Raleigh; Union (Claiborne), Malcolm Montgomery, Port Gibson; Union County, Paul Skinner, New Albany; Warren, Ray Ming, Vicksburg.

Board of Ministerial Education

Term Expires 1987

William Clawson, Hattiesburg; William Washburn, Blue Mountain; Gary Nowell, Clinton.

Christian Action Commission

Term Expires 1986

Mrs. Howard Taylor, Pacagoula; Sue Tatum, Yazoo City; Richard Myers, Cleveland; Bobby Perry, Gulfport; Dr. Jeanette Phillips, Oxford.

Term Expires 1987

Raymon Leake, Picayune; Billy Johnson, Hattiesburg; Jackie Hamilton, Meridian; Ferrell Cork, Aberdeen; Ann Allen, Columbus.

Education Commission

Term Expires 1987

James Street, Cleveland; W. R. Burris, Jackson; Raymond Lloyd, Starkville; Bob McCord, Oxford.

Historical Commission

Term Expires 1987

Bill Mason, Shannon; Billy Green, Prentiss; C. B. Hamlett, III, Hattiesburg.

Baptist Children's Village

Term Expires 1987

Doyle Cummings, Itta Bena; Kermit McGregor, Clinton; John Wayne Edwards, Hernando; Tommy Brumfield, Tylertown; James T. Hollingsworth, Hollandale.

Baptist Foundation

Term Expires 1987

Aubrey Boone, Winona; J. Kearney Travis, Jr., Hattiesburg; Bill Cassel, Union.

Baptist Medical Center

Term Expires 1987

Paul Moak, Sr., Jackson; Bill Underwood, Jackson, Joel Haire, Crystal Springs; Bill Causey, Jackson; Woodrow Bailey, Jackson.

Baptist Memorial Hospital

Term Expires 1987

William H. Preston, Jr., Booneville; Payton Self, Marks; Lucius Marion, Clarksdale.

Blue Mountain College

Term Expires 1987

John Armistead, Tupelo; Haywood Washburn, Tupelo; Mrs. Dorothy Ruff, Tupelo; Julian Fagan, Pontotoc; Ray Sartor, Ripley.

Mississippi College

Term Expires 1987

Harry Vickery, Greenville; J. W. Fagan, Laurel; Roy Noble Lee, Forest; Wilmer K. Paine, Jackson; Leland Speed, Jackson.

William Carey College

Term Expires 1987

Luther Boyd, Long Beach; Dumas Smith, Hattiesburg; H. David Roberts, Hattiesburg; Joe Dale, Prentiss; Dennis Johnsey, Pascagoula.

Mississippi Baptist Seminary

Term Expires 1987

Bud Parker, Laurel; Mrs. John Keeton, Grenada; Holmes Carlisle, Morton.

Christmas creche case reopens in high court

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review two more church-state disputes, bringing to seven the number of such cases set for decision during its new term.

Accepted Oct. 15 were cases involving a Christmas nativity display in Scarsdale, N.Y., and application of a federal fair labor law to a religious foundation in Arkansas.

The Christmas creche case reopens a heated debate within the high court over the constitutionality of nativity scenes displayed on public property.

Last March the court decided, 5-4, that cities and towns may choose to erect such displays on public property without offending the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

But in the new case, the question is whether the village of Scarsdale may be forced to provide publicly-owned property for a creche sponsored by a private group.

Also accepted for review was a case brought by the Tony and Susan Alamo Foundation of Alma, Ark., against the department of Labor over the question of whether federal fair labor provisions apply to the group.

Southern Baptist Convention

(Continued from page 2)

voluntarily cooperating. There is a structure which permits cooperation with other churches in providing programs which they cannot do alone such as missionary activities, Christian education, and seminary training yet still preserve full autonomy in each congregation.

There are problems. When the election of the president of the convention attracts a greater attendance and becomes more important than the programs of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards, there is a problem.

When pre-convention meetings of any nature, official or unofficial, large or small, scheduled or unscheduled, are used as a launching pad for candidates of the convention officers or a "pep" rally, the convention has a problem.

October Cooperative Program receipts below year ago

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — First month contributions to the 1984-85 national Cooperative Program, the unified budget of the Southern Baptist Convention, were slightly behind October 1983 figures.

Voluntarily gifts to the national and worldwide mission and education programs of the SBC from the 37 state conventions were \$8,603,213 — \$35,042 less than a year ago. The fourth Sunday of the month was Oct. 28 which meant many contributions would not have worked their way from the local church, through the state conventions and to the national level until after the monthly books were closed.

God does love a cheerful giver

Type gremlins have been at work in the Baptist Record. In the wrap up story on the Mississippi Baptist Convention, T. T. Crabtree, speaking on Planned Growth in Giving, is quoted as asking, "Why doesn't God love a cheerful giver?" The "doesn't" should be "does," of course.

Crabtree, pastor of First Church, Springfield, Mo., is national chairman of Planned Growth in Giving, the emphasis aimed at providing funding for Bold Mission Thrust. Bold Mission Thrust is the concept designed to provide a Christian witness for every person on earth by the end of the century.

The gremlins were at work also in the instance of the substitution of the word "Baptist" instead of the word "Black" in the convention wrapup of last week as the story detailed the welcoming of the first Black church to join the Mississippi Baptist Convention fellowship.

Off the Record

An elevator operator grew tired of people asking him for the time, so he hung a clock in the elevator. Now all day long, people ask him, "Is that clock right?"

So long as there are "recognized," although "unorganized," leaders of differing factions who pronounce judgments against each other; as long as the press magnifies differences and minimizes commonality; as long as those with authority to nominate board and committee members neglect selecting nominees from the broad spectrum of Baptist thought; as long as individuals or groups use conformity to a certain theological position as a litmus test for cooperation, we have problems.

The experience of watching Southern Baptists over a span of 56 conventions leads me to the conclusion that divine wisdom will prevail, the pursuit of Christian love will overcome the pursuit of power, the desire for evangelism will prevail over the desire for entrenchment, the commitment to missions will outlast the craving for control. Yes, the SBC will continue to march forward as one army composed of many people, with many viewpoints, with varied educational training, from different cultures, derived from different racial extractions, with different functions, but with a single purpose of overcoming sin in the world and enthroning Jesus as Lord in the hearts of all men.

Most Southern Baptists will follow "the wisdom of God" and not the "words of man" although it often takes time to distinguish between the two. We only need to make it possible for His will, not ours, to be done. Southern Baptists will not divide in their conquest.

Owen Cooper, a retired industrialist of Yazoo City, is a past president of both the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

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FOR SALE: 42 CHOIR ROBES; 3 instrumentalist's robes, medium blue, good shape; \$25.00 each. First Baptist Church, Box 69, Main Street, Okolona, MS 38860; (601) 447-5416.

New committee members elected

Joel Haire, First, Crystal Springs, brought the report, to the Mississippi Baptist Convention, of the Committee on Committees. The report was adopted, and the committees were elected.

Resolutions Committee
Frank Gunn Chairman
Beverly Tinnin
Odean Puckett
John Causey
Tommy Tutor
Terrell Suggs
Joel Ray

Committee on Nominations:
Bill Hardy, Chairman
Charles Stubblefield
Tommy Arinder
Leon Young
Clark McMurray

Baptist Record Advisory Committee
Three-year terms:
Ferrell Cork, Jr.
Marcus Finch
Order of Business
Three-year terms:
Mrs. James Yates
Ronnie Massey

Committee on Constitution and By-Laws
James Richardson, Chairman
Marvin Bond
Julian Fagan
John Barnes, III
Mrs. Murray Alexander
Time, Place, and Preacher
Kermit McGregor, Chairman
Bill Duncan
Ervin Brown
John Walker
Frank Harmon
Committee members serving with Haire were Mrs. Ingram Foster, James Ruffin, William Waddle, and Milton Burd.

Louisiana association disfellowships church

By Marv Knox

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP)—Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association has voted, 439-6 to remove Word of Faith Baptist Church from its fellowship for "going charismatic" by emphasizing speaking in tongues and with "taking over" a smaller pastorless church in the association.

The association's affiliations committee listed six reasons Word of Faith Baptist Church should be dismissed:

— The church "has departed in doctrine and practice from commonly accepted Southern Baptist doctrine and practice, including magnifying the gift of tongues which the Bible teaches to be the least of the gifts;"

— The Church identified itself as a "Charismatic Southern Baptist Church," disregarding "many hours of council" with associational leadership;

— The association believes the charismatic movement embraces "many errors, most notably the perversion of the doctrine of salvation by grace . . . ;"

— The association had previously passed a resolution "warning of the errors and dangers of the charismatic/neo-pentecostal movement;"

— The church had "taken possession of the property of Northland Baptist Church and absorbed the assets of a struggling sister church" within the association while Director of Missions Bruce Parrish and other associational leaders were attempting to help Northland; and

— An association, like a church, has the right to determine "its own membership, based on doctrine and practice."

Word of Faith was defended by its pastor, John Charles Murphy. He listed several arguments on behalf of the church:

— That the church "accepts the Bible only as its sole authority for faith and practice," in accord with the "Baptist Faith and Message" statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963;

— That the church "has not departed in doctrine or practice from Bible teachings" and that it "does not magnify the gift of tongues above other gifts;"

— That since the church "could not avoid the tag, she regretfully accepted the status quo" and accepted the "charismatic" label only after other churches in the association had "branded" the church;

— That the church "does not accept nor embrace" the errors its sees in the charismatic movement, including the "perversion of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith" through the doctrine of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace;" and

— That Word of Faith "did not take possession of the property" of Northland Baptist Church but rather merged with the church in a move which Northland approved "unanimously."

"Our action of disfellowship is biblically based under the doctrine of church discipline and is consistent with New Testament love," Moderator Freeman told messengers to the associational meeting.

"We do have a Bible mandate to possess sound doctrine and good ethics," he said. "The theological umbrella under which Baptists abide is broad, but there comes a time when we can no longer condone certain doctrines and practices under the command of I John 4, 'to test the spirit to see if they are of God.'"

Freeman told the Louisiana Baptist Message the association had sufficient grounds to disfellowship Word of Faith about three years ago when the church changed its name from Woodland Baptist Church and began its charismatic emphasis.

But Freeman said it was the "unethical practice" of assuming control of the Northland congregation which pushed the association to the point of disfellowship.

Director of Missions Parrish contended the takeover was more than a merger, as Murphy claimed, and questioned the validity of the unanimous vote to merge.

"The Northland church had gone down to about 10 people and the pastor had just resigned when we entered the scene last December," Parrish told the Baptist Message. "The association was in the process of seeing assistance for Northland by providing a sponsoring church."

In the meantime, Parrish said, Word of Faith made inroads into the Northland congregation. Murphy offered to be interim pastor of Northland, and the Word of Faith church, which had no Sunday evening services, met at Northland at that time.

Parrish contended that by the time the merger vote came up, all the Northland members who would have opposed it had left the congregation because they did not like the Word of Faith influence. Therefore, the actual vote to merge was not representative of the historical core of the Northland congregation, he explained.

He noted the association has "looked at the legal aspect" of retrieving the Northland property. However, since the "group who were in Northland who had opposed the takeover had left" the congregation, the association has "no legal recourse," he said.

New York ups CP giving

SYRACUSE, N. Y. (BP)—The Baptist Convention of New York adopted a budget of \$2,075,899 for 1984-85 and increased the percentage of undesignated receipts from local churches it will send on to the worldwide mission and educational programs of the Southern Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program from 22 percent to 23 percent.

A resolution expressed opposition to the appointment by the government of an ambassador to the Vatican. It urged the Executive Committee of the SBC to rescind earlier action and actively join in the legal challenge to the appointment of an ambassador to the Holy See in the name of maintaining a consistent public stance on the matter of separation of church and state.



Singing Churchmen officers

Singing Churchmen gathered for a banquet on Nov. 13 in the Sky Room of the Baptist Building, during the meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Their recently elected officers are shown. Back row, left to right: Perry Robinson, First, Ellisville, music specialist, Church Music Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, missions coordinator; James Beasley, First, Crystal Springs, central area director; Mike Edwards, North Oxford Church, north area director; Edd Brashier, First, Carthage, instrumental coordinator. Front row: Garner Keel, First, Brookhaven, secretary; Mike Smith, Parkway, Jackson, vice president; Lee Gordon, Van Winkle Church, Jackson, president; Emma Ainsworth, Church Music Department, treasurer. Not pictured: Gary Anglin, First, Pascagoula, handbell coordinator; Leon Bedsole, First, Biloxi, south area director; Bill Barnes, Morrison Heights, Clinton, publicity director; Ex officio: Milfred Valentine, Jones County Junior College, choral director; Dan Hall, Jackson, director, Church Music Department.

Letters to the Editor

Why have a war?

Editor:

Why is it necessary that our denomination choose sides, divide into factions, and one declare war on the other? Is it not more important that the Southern Baptist Convention devote its time, money, and energy to winning the lost to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Will it serve any purpose and accomplish any good for those whose beliefs differ to publicly attack each other? Will not this, in fact, do more harm than good? Are we children playing in the market place? Are we not straining at gnats and swallowing camels, and are we not damaging the evangelistic thrust of the Southern Baptist Convention?

Is it important what one preacher believes as opposed to another? Does not each Baptist church function in individual autonomy? What possible good can come from promoting divisions within our ranks and exposing the convention to the unsympathetic secular news media?

Why the controversy? Is this a power struggle by grown up children for control of the play house?

I think you will find the rank and file Baptist to be nauseatingly appalled with the childishness of this argument!

May God help us get a glimpse of true discipleship.

Ben Yarber, pastor
Artesia Church
Artesia

Amen!

Personally, I feel that the reason that we have chosen sides is that there are two conventions among us — us and them. We could divide up, and us could go one way and them go another. But if we did that, then we would soon have four conventions; for both us and them would divide again

as us and them factions would begin to develop in both of the conventions that would come about as a result of the first division.

That's simplistic, and maybe a bit facetious, but it's the way it seems to me.

And now I'll probably get shot.

This is not to take away from the seriousness with which both sides see their viewpoints. And I can understand the perspectives of both. But we'll never get to the point that we will all agree, and the one overarching factor that should be guiding us all is the Great Commission. We can all agree on that and still maintain our differing positions on other matters.

I realize that the fundamentalists will insist that such a solution would leave out their contentions, and it is not intended to be so. Actually, I agree with many of the concerns of the fundamentalists. I just don't believe that the things about which they are concerned is why we have a convention.

I think we are going to have to get back to the very basic idea of why have a convention or give up the idea altogether and go back to a philosophy of every church doing its own thing. And that would be tragedy.

Now we have both preached sermons. Thank you for the opportunity of piggy-backing on yours. — Editor

Fruit for Africa

In regard to your editorial of Nov. 15 stating that the Sahara Desert is enveloping Africa and that foliage is being consumed . . .

Would a long-range solution be for each Baptist church in America to donate a fruit-bearing tree?

Perhaps if the Africans saw that Baptists care, our efforts would bear spiritual fruits also.

Mrs. R. L. Arehart
Natchez

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9
Thursday, November 29, 1984

Southeastern trustees OK student center

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — Officers were elected and a go-ahead given for a \$2.4 million student center project during the fall meeting of the board of trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

O. Charles Horton, pastor of College Park Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., was named chairman by the 30-member board, succeeding W. Lee Beaver, layman from St. Louis, who had been on the board the maximum two one-year terms.

Other officers elected were: Bill Bruster, pastor of First Baptist Church of Bearden, Knoxville, Tenn., vice-chairman; Charles Midkiff, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, Ky., secretary and J. Edwin Collette, member of First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C., treasurer.

Approval was granted for construction to proceed on the student center, with a contract to be awarded Central Builders, Rocky Mount, N.C.

Madison, N. J. anniversary

Editor:

The Madison Baptist Church, 203 Green Avenue, Madison, New Jersey 07940, the first Southern Baptist Church in the state of New Jersey, will be observing its 25th anniversary on May 5, 1985. In addition, a year long series of special events is being planned.

Former members are encouraged to contact the church so information can be sent to them concerning the many events planned. The church anticipates welcoming many former members on these occasions.

Since its inception, Madison Baptist Church has helped to form 11 additional churches and chapels in New Jersey.

Dr. Wallace A. C. Williams is the present pastor.

Jewel Weaver
Church Clerk/Historian

Pray for MKs

Dec. 2 — Melissa S. Deever, Ivory Coast, Mississippi College.

Dec. 4 — Ricki Lynnette Brogan, Hinds Junior College.

Pleasant Ridge anticipates 125th

Pleasant Ridge Church, Woodland: Dec. 2; 125th anniversary; services begin at 10:30 a.m. and continue throughout the afternoon. Frank Childress and Dewey Roach, speakers. Tim George, pastor.

Knowledge is what's left after you've forgotten your education.

Mexican desert grows Baptist churches

By Larry Brumley

DALLAS (BP) — Like a modern-day Apostle Paul, Juan Ponce is combining the northern Mexican states of Chihuahua and Coahuila, preaching the gospel and establishing churches.

The 58-year-old pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alpine, Texas, has adopted the Great Chihuahuan Desert as his personal mission field. The vast rugged country across the Rio Grande River from Big Bend National Park is where God has called him to preach, says the former Mexican farmer.

Since 1974, when he left the Catholic church to become a Baptist missionary, evangelist and pastor, Ponce has established 12 churches and 11 preaching points in small, isolated villages. Most of the pastors are laymen whom Ponce personally led to

Christ and disciples. Some were once drug runners and village rowdies.

In only 10 years, Ponce, who received financial support from Texas Baptists' Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions, has seen his labor shift a predominantly Catholic area into a flourishing Baptist mission base. The churches have formed an association (Asociacion Misiones Bautistas de la Frontera de Chih y Coah) and are in the process of becoming affiliated with the National Baptist Convention of Mexico.

Though the villages are poor — many families live on \$40 a month — the association has established a mission fund to begin work in surrounding villages. Most of the churches have pledged 20 percent of their receipts to the fund.

Each of the 12 churches has a sponsoring church in Texas. First Baptist Church, Valley Mills; First Baptist Church, Midland; First Baptist Church, San Angelo; and Mother Holmes Memorial Baptist Church, Sheffield, construct buildings, provide financial support for pastors of the churches and send medical teams to the area. First Baptist Church, Valley Mills, and First Baptist Church, San Angelo, paid for seminary extension training for 13 of the Mexico pastors. Eight have completed the course work and recently were ordained.

Ponce said he was raised in a home that was "100 percent religious."

"I was very Catholic, and I fulfilled all the requirements of the church: confession, Mass, rosaries, etc. I also participated in many of the church's

organizations. Although I was involved in all of this, I had a great emptiness inside."

While attending Mass one day, Ponce said the priest read Matthew 6:33: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." At first he didn't understand the meaning of the verse. The priest didn't explain it, but the words stuck in Ponce's mind.

"I had an unrest and obsession with it (Matthew 6:33). I searched for a Bible and when I finally found one it seemed like an eternity to reach home so I could read it. When I started reading it, it didn't take long for God to touch my heart. As a good Catholic, I continued to attend church, but I was different. I felt a desire to share

with people about Jesus."

Ponce began to preach in the small villages around Santa Elena, Mexico, his hometown on the banks of the Rio Grande River. He encountered opposition from the priest, who ordered him to "restrain himself." Villagers began to ask Ponce to conduct Bible studies in his home. He received a second reprimand from the priest and withdrew from the Catholic church. Four months later, the priest died and opposition to his evangelistic efforts ceased.

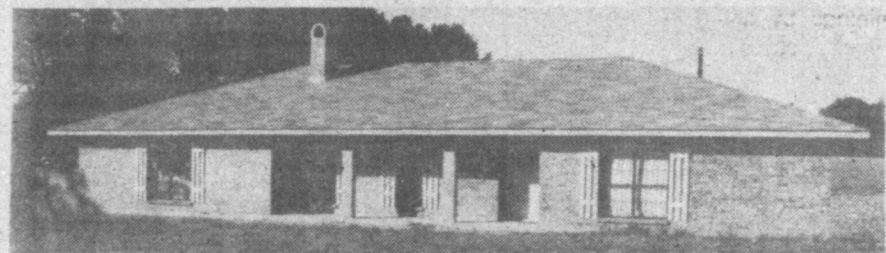
A few months later, Ponce met Neal Raymond, a layman from First Baptist Church, Shamrock, Texas, who was working in the area with the Rio Grande River Ministry. Raymond's influence led Ponce to become a Baptist, and he was ordained in 1978 by First Baptist Church, San Angelo.

Ponce moved to the United States last year to become pastor of Emmanuel. It was a difficult decision, he says, because his heart was in Mexico. Although he no longer gets around to every Mexican village every month, he still makes several trips a year to villages to conduct "institutes" to train and motivate the pastors.

He has no formal education. "My seminary is in the villages," Ponce says. With guidance from Jimmy Smith, coordinator of the River Ministry's Mexican Rural Work, and Raymond Sanders, director of missions for Big Bend Baptist Association, Ponce is helping achieve a major goal of the River Ministry — building strong, self-supporting Mexican Baptist churches.

Larry Brumley is director of public relations, Carey College.

—Just for the Record—



Union Church Baptist Church, Union Church, recently completed and dedicated a new and debt free brick parsonage. Open house was observed Nov. 4. The project was begun by the late Orville Pritchard. His wife, Mrs. Ruth Pritchard, and Mr. and Mrs. Rayford Varnado gave the property and several of the members used their skills to help with the work. Donations and love gifts were received. Glen Mullens is pastor.



Bethel Church, Copiah, recently recognized those receiving Sunday School perfect attendance pins. Duwayne Tullos is pastor. From left to right, top row, Wallace Gandy, 13 yrs.; John Ashley Kimble, 4 yrs.; Timothy Taylor, 3 yrs. Middle row, Fay Gandy, 4 yrs.; Janet Kimble, 3 yrs.; Tammy Gandy, 11 yrs.; Peggy Taylor, 5 yrs.; Karen Rhodes, 6 yrs. Bottom row, Gabriel Kimble, 4 yrs.; Amanda Lack, 2 yrs.; Stacy Taylor, 7 yrs.; Missy Hemphill, 4 yrs.



The children's choir of Fairfield Church, Moselle, performed the cantata, *Story Tellin' Man* at Fellowship Church, Ellisville, Nov. 11. On Oct. 28, the cantata was performed at Fairfield Church, under the direction of Mrs. Gwen Knight and Mrs. Patsy Hill; accompanist, Mrs. Peggy Harper. The youth department narrated the story with puppets. Michael York is pastor. Choir members, left to right, are Shannon Hill, Vanessa Town, Sabrina Odom, April Harper, Julie Harless, Chrystil Hill, Amy Knight, and Amy Shows.

More U.S. aid urged for Ethiopian famine

WASHINGTON (BP) — A member of the House of Representatives' Select Committee on Hunger has urged the Reagan administration to take steps already authorized by Congress to bolster the United States' response to the famine in Ethiopia.

Rep. Tony Hall, D-Ohio, the first member of Congress to visit Ethiopia in more than a year, told reporters at a Capitol Hill press conference the "misery and despair" he saw in the African nation is "beyond imagination."

Hall, who heads the International Task Force of the Select Committee on Hunger, praised efforts of private voluntary organizations at work in Ethiopia and said the U.S. government should do more.

Specifically, Hall called on President Reagan to use authority Congress granted under the Foreign Assistance Act to borrow up to \$50 million to purchase "non-food supplies" needed in the relief effort. "Sacks of grain and rice can save no lives sitting on loading docks or broken trucks since the relief effort needs truck tires, airplane tires, and spare truck parts."

The Ohio congressman also said tents, blankets, well-drilling equipment, and medical supplies are urgently needed.

In addition, Hall urged the ad-

ministration to make greater use of Section 416 of the Agriculture Act which authorizes donations of surplus wheat and commodities. He also cited the U.S. government's four million metric ton wheat reserve, of which 300,000 metric tons are available for food emergencies.

In a related move, Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., also urged Secretary of Agriculture John Block to release immediately the 300,000 metric tons of wheat available in the Emergency Food Reserve to aid famine relief efforts in Africa.

Hall noted the emergency food reserve has not been used since it was set up in 1980 and said the president "should without delay release this 300,000 tons."

"It is unconscionable people on the other side of the globe die of starvation while mountains of food — yes, literally mountains of food — pile up in our silos and warehouses."

Hall estimated Ethiopia will need 1.3 million metric tons of food during the next year but less than 25 percent of that amount has been delivered or pledged.

Expressing confidence in the U.S. political will to help the Ethiopians, Hall said, "Just give me an airplane to take the decision makers to see what I have seen and we'll get every penny we need."

N.O. concert to feature "Messiah" sing-along

NEW ORLEANS — Vivaldi's "Gloria" and the opportunity to join a sing-a-long of the Christmas portion of Handel's "Messiah" will highlight the annual Christmas concert of the New Orleans Seminary Chorus 7:30 p.m., Dec. 3, in the seminary's chapel.

Joining the chorus will be members of the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra. Al Washburn, chairman of the seminary's church music division, will conduct.

Following the "Gloria" the audience will be invited to join in a

"Messiah" sing-a-long.

Soloists will be tenors, William Thornton of Denham Springs, and Lewis Oswalt of Hammond; basses, David Roberts of Brookhaven, and Stephen Nance of Shreveport; mezzo-soprano Rinda Coleman of Pensacola; and sopranos Vicki Ward of Marietta, Ga.; Karen Hardy of Jackson; and Andrea Reed of Buford, Ga. All soloists from the "Messiah" are students at the seminary.

This concert is open to the public and no admission will be charged.

Cherry Street honors pastor

Cherry Street Church, Clarksdale, on Oct. 21 held Pastor Appreciation Day for its pastor, Wesley Nicholass. The program took the format of "This Is Your Life."

Taking part in the program were Nicholass's four children: Susan, wife of Paul Blanchard, pastor of Lakeview Church, Leland; Ray of Oxford; Robert of Jackson; and Roger of Laguna Park, Tex.

Special surprise out-of-town guests were Clyde Wilton, pastor of Immanuel Church, Bryan, Tex.; Malcomb Pinion, pastor of Tula Church, Oxford; and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Johnson of Poplar Bluff, Mo.

Special greetings were sent from W. L. Compere of Newton; Mrs. Thurman Bryant of Clinton; Ervin Brown of Hernando; G. E. Jolley of Batesville; and E. V. May of Texas.

Numerous members from churches where Nicholass has previously served were present. Cherry Street members presented Nicholass with a desk chair, as a gift of appreciation.

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Nicaragua Baptists struggle to survive war, revolution

By Eric Bridges

OCOTAL, Nicaragua (BP) — When Edmundo Paguaga couldn't take it anymore, he gathered his family and moved south.

Paguaga, a Nicaraguan Baptist pastor, used to lead a church about six miles from the Nicaragua-Honduras border. But the church died. One by one, Baptist families terrorized by the "contras" — Nicaraguan rebels based in southern Honduras and Costa Rica — left the border area. Paguaga stayed until a grenade destroyed his house.

He resettled in Ocotal, a better defended city in northern Nicaragua, and became pastor of the Baptist church there. Ocotal has been attacked, too, but Paguaga doesn't want to move again even though he still has problems. "I have to watch what I preach," he says. "I stick to the Bible. If I say something out of line on the one hand I could be arrested by the police. If I say something on the other hand I could become a target for the contras."

The Paguaga family, like all other Nicaraguans, find themselves in the middle of a historical shift of gears. Some have lost their lives in that shift; more have had to learn to live with suffering, violence and change.

First, a 1972 earthquake destroyed the capital, Managua, creating more than 200,000 refugees in a single day. Then the bloody national revolution climaxed in 1979 with the overthrow of the long dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza and the victory of the Marxist-oriented Sandinista National Liberation Front. Fifty thousand died. Now the contras fight to oust the Sandinista government.

The Nicaraguan revolution marked its fifth birthday in July. How are Nicaraguan Baptists today? They've lost four churches in the north because of fighting along the Honduran border. At least one pastor and his family live as refugees. A Baptist health clinic has been destroyed; four more have closed in the war zone.

Last December Baptist health worker Ana Julia Lopez, 22, was marched to a river bank in Rio Blanco and stabbed to death by a band of contras. Other young Baptists have died as soldiers. With a new military draft in effect, mothers fear more deaths.

A sluggish socialist economy, drained by a massive Sandinista military buildup and U.S. economic sanctions, has created chronic shortages of food, medicine and other essentials. Some pastors, unable to feed their families, depend on aid from the national Baptist convention.

Baptist Hospital in Managua runs without sterilizing equipment, a clothes dryer or enough medical supplies and food. "We tell our pastors to tell their members not to get sick," says Baptist convention worker Pablo Garcia.

The four Southern Baptist missionaries who worked in Nicaragua — literature workers Stanley and Glenna Stamps and music promoters Ed and Kathy Steele — left in 1982 on the recommendation of Baptist leaders. The Stampses transferred to Honduras, the Steeles to Panama.

"The first and most important factor was (the missionaries') own per-

sonal safety," explains Tomas Tellez, executive secretary of the Baptist Convention of Nicaragua. "Bombs don't distinguish between North Americans and Nicaraguans." He adds that in the politically charged atmosphere of Managua, innocent words or actions of missionaries, particularly North Americans, can be used against the churches they serve.

Tellez doesn't rule out Southern Baptist missionaries returning when the "situation has stabilized a bit more." The literature ministry begun by the Stampses continues under convention leadership and still receives books from the Foreign Mission Board's Spanish publishing house in Texas.

Baptist work in Nicaragua is largely the product of the American Baptist denomination. Southern Baptists were invited in the 1970s to send missionaries to assist in the specialized ministries. One American Baptist missionary family from the United States remain, but has been forced to move south because of frequent contra attacks in the north.

For all their troubles, Nicaraguan Baptists, like their counterparts in El Salvador, are growing. Sixteen new churches have started in the last five years. The convention now counts 60 churches and 140 mission points with more than 6,000 members. A new program challenges Baptists to double the number of churches within two years.

Nationally, evangelical Protestants number about 400,000 approximately 14 percent of the 2.9 million population. The Roman Catholic Church claims most of the remaining population.

During the revolution, a National Guard tank blew up Managua's Genezareth Baptist Church because of pastor Jairo Gutierrez's preaching on social issues. But the church stands again. "We still have no pulpit," Gutierrez admits. "We work with what we have."

Genezareth members have labored to vaccinate their community against disease, teach literacy, clear out clogged sewers. Now about 20 young people and adults are building makeshift houses for poor people on 10 community-donated acres. They use any materials they can find — wood, tin, cardboard. This dream: 150 houses with a little chapel in the middle.

On a national scale, Baptists work in disaster relief, clean water projects, technical training and health clinics. Southern Baptist relief funds have helped, even after the missionaries left in 1982.

But Baptists and other Christians in Nicaragua are struggling to come to terms with something that transcends immediate physical needs: the revolution. The "process," as it is often called in Nicaragua, didn't end with the victory of the Sandinistas in 1979. Now it affects every aspect of life, including religion.

The Sandinistas declare there is "no contradiction" between Christianity and their revolution. We over-

threw an unjust regime, they reason, and now every Nicaraguan is needed to rebuild the country. Several Roman Catholic priests are high-ranking government officials. Even the atheists in the Sandinista camp admit (publicly at least) that religion will never die among the profoundly religious Nicaraguans.

But the Catholic-government relationship has been stormy. Some high-ranking church officials charge the Sandinistas are betraying the ideals of the revolution and attempting to manipulate and divide the church. In the conflict, church buildings have been taken over by Sandinista mobs and personal attacks made on church spokesmen.

Protestants have had better relations with the government, though the regime has verbally attacked evangelicals more than once and forcibly closed numerous Miskito Indian churches in the war zone. Baptist leaders have been prominent government supporters and vocal critics of U.S. military aid to the contras. They deny they've been pressured to make public statements.

"One of the things that has distinguished us as evangelicals is that we've been open to dialogue with the government. And the government has been open to the dialogue," says convention president Gonzalo Mairena. "We want to be part of the (revolutionary) process, not victims of it," adds Pastor Elmer Barahona.

But there have been victims: churches, relationships, even families. Some Baptists wholeheartedly support the new order; some actively helped bring the Sandinistas to power. Others opposed them.

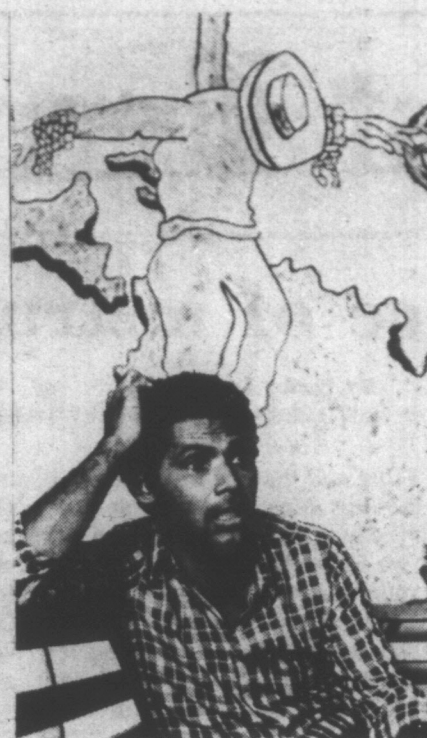
Convention worker Pablo Garcia, a respected "pastor to pastors" among Baptists, tries to make peace when churches split over politics. "These are not momentary conflicts," Garcia explains. "There is shouting and strong confrontations . . . It's only with God's help that we have held these churches together."

But in Diriamba, the pastor and young people left the church to form a new one. "So now Diriamba has one church that is revolutionary and another that is very conservative," says Garcia. But they still work together, he adds. "They are good Baptists."

Influential Baptist pastor Eugenio Zamora summarizes the situation: "Where you find two Baptists, you find three opinions!" Zamora's own family is a case in point. His son is a Sandinista, but one of his daughters rejects the revolution. When the family gets together, says another daughter, "We don't talk about it."

For evangelicals in Nicaragua, the problems, the pain, the contradictions for Christians living in that revolutionary country won't end this year or this generation. But Baptists say they intend to be part of "the process." And they expect to survive.

Eric Bridges writes for the FMB.



PARTICIPANTS, NOT VICTIMS — "We want to be part of the (revolutionary) process, not victims of it," says Nicaraguan Baptist pastor Elmer Barahona. Barahona, who leads a church in Corinto — site of bombings and port minings by anti-government "contra" forces — says the revolution in Nicaragua has helped churches. Other Baptists take the opposite view. Churches and families have divided over the issue. (BP) PHOTO By Joanna Pinneo.

Names in the News

Lloyd Wilson was ordained to the gospel ministry on Nov. 25 at 7 p.m. by Parkway Church, Jackson. He is a student at New Orleans Seminary. During the year he has been called as pastor of Fellowship Church, Bellefontaine. He and his wife, Jeanne, plan to move full-time on the church field after his graduation from the seminary next May.

Gerald Hegwood, completed six years of service with First Church, of Helena, November 11. The church presented him and his family a Silver Savings toward a trip to Germany to visit family members who are stationed there. His wife is the former Darlene Hightower of Eastman, Ga., and they have four daughters. The church has added a new sanctuary, and various phases of renovation since his coming. Hegwood has been selected associational church training director of the year by the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He serves as chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee for Jackson County Baptist Association and vice moderator. He is a native of the Mississippi Gulf Coast (Biloxi).

John F. Sumner Jr., was honored by the students of Jones County Junior College on completion of his eighth year as director of Baptist Student Union. He is not only a director but also a friend and counselor to many people who come to him for guidance and leadership.

Thomas Earl Rush has resigned the pastorate of Avera Church, Greene County. A 1984 graduate of William Carey College, he is available to supply as interim and pastoral work in North Mississippi. His address is Rt. 7, Box 180, Pontotoc, Miss., 38863, or phone 489-6372.

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Missionaries on furlough

Missionaries now on furlough in Mississippi are: David and Linda Finnell, Singapore, 3331 Old Canton Road, Jackson 39216; Larry and Cheryl Cox, Burkina Faso, 619 Holly Ridge, Vicksburg 39180; Paul and Brenda Lee, Spain, 207 S. Washington St., Starkville 39759;

Don and Margie Mines, Argentina, Pine Trails Apts., Apt. M-5, Clinton 39056; James and Mary Slack, Philippines, 2334 Coronet Place, Jackson 39204; Gerald and Glenda Davis, Philippines, 520 Magazine St., Tupelo 38801; James and Guinevere Young, Bangladesh, 1625 Easy St., Yazoo City 39194; Jerry and Joyce Spire, Malawi, c/o Van Winkle Baptist Church, 4240 Carter Circle, Jackson, 39209; Jerry and Glenda White, Korea, 416 Ford, Columbia 39429; Antonina Canzoneri, Bahamas, 5939 Clinton Blvd., Jackson 39209; Ron and Sue Ballard, Paraguay, Country Est. Mobile Home Park, Rt. 4, Lot 36, Meridian 39301.

James and Betty Bartley, Uruguay; Mary Alice Ditsworth, Indonesia; and Emogene Harris, Nigeria, are to arrive in Mississippi this month.



Peggy and Ray Bryant, lay missionaries to Honduras, will speak at Highland Church, Vicksburg, 11 a.m., Sunday, December 2. They are members of Hillcrest Church, Jackson, and are the parents of four children.



Larry Braswell (left), was licensed to the gospel ministry, by First Church, Boyle, Oct. 21, certificate was presented to him by Mike Carr (right), pastor. Braswell, a student at Mississippi State University, is available for supply preaching and interim work. He can be reached at No. 2 Briarwood Townhouses, 607 Yellowjacket Dr., Starkville, MS 39759, or call (601) 323-8512.